

Disheartened With Your Meditation? Valuable Advice From Sri Aurobindo

by Pulkit Mathur, The Spiritual Bee



“Keep quietude, persevere (in your sadhana). These are the clouds that cover the growing Light; but the true consciousness is there increasing behind the clouds.”

– Sri Aurobindo

Frustrations, delays, doubts and difficulties are a part of every sadhak’s (spiritual aspirant’s) sadhana. This truth was beautifully underscored, by Shriram Sharma Acharya in his retelling of the [story of Madhvacharya](#) (previous post), which resonated with so many Spiritual Bee readers.

Therefore in this post, we shall delve into some more precious and practical advice, on how to deal with delays in receiving the results of our sadhana. This advice comes to us from Sri Aurobindo, the God-realized sage and Avatar, who lovingly shared it with his disciples.

Sri Aurobindo’s disciples would often write him letters, describing the challenges they were experiencing in their meditation and spiritual development. Their guru would painstakingly write back his responses of guidance, which were so numerous that today, they are chronicled in a 4 Volume set of [Letters on Yoga](#). (Scroll down the page that opens via this link, to download all 4 Volumes for free.)

These 4 Volumes of practical guidance are extremely precious and a must read for any aspirant who is seriously pursuing the path to God-Realization, also known as Self-Realization (Atma-Gyan) or Soul-Realization. Some wonderful excerpts from Volume II of this series are enclosed below.

The Path of Yoga is Long and Requires Years of Preparation

The word Yoga means a union of the individual soul with the Divine (Cosmic Soul). From the ordinary state of human consciousness, a yogi is attempting to transition to the state of Infinite Divine Consciousness. This jump from a state of lower consciousness to an immeasurably higher Infinite one, is not at all easy. It requires years of preparation and a steady inner purification.

“Yoga implies a long and difficult work and one must be ready to accept the necessity of years of preparation and purification and increasing consecration (devotion and surrender to the Divine) before the greater results can come.”

– Sri Aurobindo, [Letters on Yoga II](#).

“A certain amount of purification is necessary before there can be any realisation of the Divine and that is what has been going on in you. It is after all not a very long time since the real purification began and it is never an easy work. So the impatience may be natural, but it is not exactly reasonable.”

– Sri Aurobindo’s reply to a query by a disciple, [Letters on Yoga II](#).

Purification Means a Rejection of Egotism

In order to realize the infinitude of one’s consciousness, a sadhak has to work to free himself/herself from the clutches of the ego, which causes him/her to identify with the mind and body.

The sadhak must train to detach his/her consciousness from the ego and let it rest in its unconditioned Infinite Divine state during Samadhi.

To achieve this, all sensory impulses which give rise to the ego, the feelings of I, me, my happiness, my pleasure, my grief, my sorrow etc. have to be overcome. This is known as inner purification.

“Purification — rejecting from one’s nature all that is egoistic or of the nature of rajasic desire. Aspiration for peace and calm and a perfect equality. Purification and a basis of calm are the first necessary steps in the spiritual life.”

– Sri Aurobindo, [Letters on Yoga II](#).

“The aspiration must be for entire purification, especially (1) purification from sex, so that no sex imaginations may enter and the sex impulse may cease, (2) purification from desires and demands, (3) purification from

depression which is the result of disappointed desires. It is the most important for you.”

– **Sri Aurobindo’s guidance to a disciple, Letters on Yoga II.**

“One who is under the domination of his passions, would find the Yoga difficult and, unless supported by a true inner call and a sincere and strong aspiration for the spiritual consciousness and union with the Divine, might very easily fall fatally and his effort come to nothing.”

– **Sri Aurobindo’s guidance to a disciple, Letters on Yoga II.**

Since Inner Purification (Overcoming of the Ego) Takes Time, Cultivation of Patience and Perseverance Is Absolutely Essential

As we have seen in the [previous post](#), a regularly performed sadhana (spiritual practice of meditation/mantra japa etc.) steadily purifies the Antahkarana (inner subconscious mind), and prepares the grounds for God-realization, even though the sadhak himself/herself may be completely unaware of these inner changes that are taking place. Slowly but surely the work to overcome the ego is being done in the inner realms, and so a sadhak must persevere forward with unwavering determination and patience. All doubts, impatience and overeagerness that naturally arise in the mind, from time to time, must be firmly rejected.

“Sadhana is a thing which takes time and needs patience. There are often periods of quiescence in which a working is going on behind of which the mind is not aware—all seems then to be inert and dull; but if one has patience and confidence, the consciousness passes through these periods to new openings and things which seemed to be impossible to effect at that time, get done. The impulse to rush away is always a mistake—perseverance in the path is the one rule to cling to and with that finally all obstacles are overcome.”

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

“It is true that a great patience and steadfastness is needed. Be then firm and patient and fixed on the aims of the sadhana, but not over-eager to have them at once. A work has to be done in you and is being done; help it to be done by keeping an attitude of firm faith and confidence. Doubts rise in all, they are natural to the human physical mind—reject them. Impatience and overeagerness for the result at once are natural to the human vital; it is by firm confidence in the (Divine) Mother that they will disappear.”

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

“Impatience is always a mistake, it does not help but hinders. A quiet happy faith and confidence is the best foundation for sadhana, Full Yogic realisation does not come all at once, it comes after a long preparation of the Adhara (the base i.e. our Inner Subconscious Mind) which may take a long time.”

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

“There are always difficulties and a hampered progress in the early stages and a delay in the opening of the inner doors until the being is ready.

If you feel whenever you meditate the quiescence and the flashes of the inner Light and if the inward urge is growing so strong that the external hold is decreasing and the vital disturbances (emotional disturbances of anger, doubt, grief, fear, pride etc.) are losing their force, that is already a great progress.

The road of Yoga is long, every inch of ground has to be won against much resistance and no quality is more needed by the sadhak than patience and single-minded perseverance with a faith that remains firm through all difficulties, delays and apparent failures.”

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

“It is perfectly true also that if a man is sincere, he will reach the Divine. But it does not follow that he will reach immediately, easily and without delay. Your error is there, to fix for God a term, five years, six years, and doubt because the effect is not yet there.

A man may be centrally sincere and yet there may be many things that have to be changed in him before realisation can begin. His sincerity must enable him to persevere always — for it is a longing for the Divine that nothing can quench, neither delay nor disappointment nor difficulty nor anything else.”

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

Despair and Despondency Must Be Avoided Because They Drive Away the Divine

Feelings of despair and despondency must be avoided, because they end up closing the nascent openings in our inner self to the Divine Consciousness. Instead as sadhaks we must persevere on with patience and faith, knowing that whenever our inner self (the Antahkarana), becomes sufficiently purified, spiritual experiences will naturally and necessarily come. They may come slowly at first and then in greater and greater numbers, as a means of confirming to us that our efforts in sadhana are beginning to bear fruit and we should further strive to steadily progress towards attaining to the Divine Consciousness.

“What I want of you besides aspiring for faith? Well, just a thoroughness and persistence in the method! Don’t aspire for two days and then sink into the dumps. Give the Divine a full sporting chance. When he lights something in you or is preparing a light, don’t come in with a wet blanket of despondency and throw it on the poor flame.

You will say it is a mere candle that is lit — nothing at all? But in these matters, when the darkness of human mind and life and body has to be dissipated, a candle is always a beginning — a lamp can follow and afterwards a sun — but the beginning must be allowed to have a sequel — not get cut off from its natural sequelae by chinks of sadness and doubt and despair.

At the beginning and for a long time the experiences do usually come in little quanta with empty spaces between — but, if allowed their way, the spaces will diminish and the quantum theory give way to the Newtonian

continuity of the spirit. But you have never yet given it a real chance. The empty spaces have become peopled with doubts and denials and so the quanta have become rare, the beginnings remain beginnings. Other difficulties you have faced and rejected, but this difficulty you dangled too much for a long time and it has become strong — it must be dealt with by a persevering effort.

I do not say that all doubts must disappear before anything comes — that would be to make sadhana impossible, for doubt is the mind's persistent assailant. All I say is, don't allow the assailant to become a companion, don't give him the open door and the fireside seat. Above all don't drive away the incoming Divine with that dispiriting wet blanket of sadness and despair!"

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

Even An Avatar (Incarnation of God) Like Sri Aurobindo Took A Long Time to Attain To God-Realization

"In a more deep and spiritual sense a concrete realisation is that which makes the thing realised more real, dynamic, intimately present to the consciousness than any physical thing can be.

Such a realisation of the personal Divine or of the impersonal Brahman (Infinite Divine Consciousness) or of the Self does not usually come at the beginning of a sadhana or in the first years or for many years. It comes so to a very few; mine came fifteen years after my first pre-Yogic experience in London and in the fifth year after I started Yoga.

That I consider extraordinarily quick, an express train speed almost—though there may no doubt have been several quicker achievements. But to expect and demand it so soon and get fed up because it does not come and declare Yoga impossible except for two or three in the ages would betoken in the eyes of any experienced Yogi or sadhaka a rather rash and abnormal impatience.

Most would say that a slow development is the best one can hope for in the first years and only when the nature is ready and fully concentrated towards the Divine can the definitive experience come. To some rapid preparatory experiences can come at a comparatively early stage, but even they cannot escape the labour of the consciousness which will make these experiences culminate in the realisation that is enduring and complete."

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

A Firm Courage & Reliance on the Divine for Support Through All Ups & Downs is the Key

"One who has not the courage to face patiently and firmly life and its difficulties will never be able to go through the still greater inner difficulties of the sadhana. The very first lesson in this Yoga is to face life and its trials with a quiet mind, a firm courage and an entire reliance on the Divine Shakti."

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

"Determination is needed and a firm patience, not to be discouraged by this or that failure. It is a change in the habit of the physical nature and that needs a long patient work of detail."

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

"It is the fact that people who are grateful and cheerful and ready to go step by step, even by slow steps, if need be, do actually march faster and more surely than those who are impatient and in haste and at each step despair or murmur."

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

"They [patience and peace] go together. By having patience under all kinds of pressure you lay the foundations of peace."

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

"[Endurance:] The power to go through effort, difficulty or trouble without getting fatigued, depressed, discouraged or impatient and without breaking off the effort or giving up one's aim or resolution."

– **Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga II.**

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